

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This paper is submitted responsive to the Office Action mailed September 6, 2006. Reconsideration of this application in light of the accompanying remarks and amendments is courteously solicited.

In the aforesaid action, the Examiner took the following steps, each of which is discussed below under a corresponding heading.

1. The Examiner rejected claim 1 as anticipated by Oh et al.
2. The Examiner rejected claims 1-2 as obvious over Delafosse in view of Chun et al.
3. The Examiner rejected claims 3-4 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of De Mario et al.
4. The Examiner rejected claim 5 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of De Mario and Delafosse.
5. The Examiner rejected claim 6 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of De Mario and Nguyen.
6. The Examiner rejected claims 7-8 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of Mayet and Foulds, or in the alternative over Delafosse in view of Chun, Mayet and Foulds.
7. In the Response to Argument section, in addition to issues which are discussed above, the Examiner maintained a refusal to enter drawing corrections which were filed on October 24, 2005 and objected to the earlier amendments to the application.

Each of these rejections will be discussed in the order listed.

1. The Examiner rejected claim 1 as anticipated by Oh et al.

Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested. This claim as amended is now presented as claim 9. The claim calls for the fuel rod support part (52) to be bent to

have equiangular surface contact with a fuel rod supported by the grid spring. The teaching of Oh et al. does not meet this claim limitation. The Examiner indicated that significance was given to the teaching of Oh et al. at column 6, lines 42-44. The consequence of the spring elastically supporting the fuel rod and being bent toward the center of the grid element 11 is that there is a flat surface contacting the rod. This is not the structure called for by claim 9. Certainly a flat surface contacting a fuel rod is not the equiangular contact called for by claim 9. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

2. The Examiner rejected claims 1-2 as obvious over Delafosse in view of Chun et al.

Reconsideration of this rejection as it applies to rewritten claims 9-10 is respectfully requested. On page 5 of the most recent Office Action, the Examiner asserts that bearing-arms 14 in Figure 5 of Delafosse are substantially the same as the vertical support part called for in the claims. It is pointed out that the bearing-arms 14 of Delafosse do not extend from the top and bottom edges of the vertical opening. The bearing-arms 14 of Delafosse are not supported by both edges of the vertical opening. Chun et al. likewise does not disclose a vertical support part extending vertically in the vertical opening. Reconsideration of this rejection is respectfully requested.

3. The Examiner rejected claims 3-4 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of De Mario et al.

Claims 3-4 are rewritten as claims 11-12 and depend from claim 9 and are believed to be patentable based upon this

dependency and in their own right.

4. The Examiner rejected claim 5 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of De Mario and Delafosse.

Claim 5 has been rewritten as claim 13 and depends from claim 9. Claim 13 is submitted to be allowable based upon dependence from claim 9 and also in its own right.

5. The Examiner rejected claim 6 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of De Mario and Nguyen.

Claim 6 has been rewritten as claim 14 and depends from claim 9. Claim 14 is submitted to be allowable based upon dependence from claim 9 and also in its own right.

6. The Examiner rejected claims 7-8 as obvious over Oh et al. in view of Mayet and Foulds, or in the alternative over Delafosse in view of Chun, Mayet and Foulds.

Claims 7-8 are rewritten as claims 15-16 and are submitted to be allowable over the art of record. Claims 15-16 call for the vertical support part and the inner support part to be different in structure. The Examiner concedes that this is not taught specifically in the art of record, and relies instead upon teachings from Mayet et al. and Foulds. Simply put, not one of these references contains different spring structures as called for in claim 15. Mayet discloses that certain materials (Zircaloy) are well suited to certain conditions. This teaching is far removed from the claimed different spring structures. Foulds discusses rods of different sizes. The combination of these diverse teachings is beyond that which would be done by a person of ordinary skill in the art, and also falls far short of the requirements of claims 15-16. These claims are also submitted to be allowable based upon their dependency from claim 1.

7. The Examiner maintained a refusal to enter drawing corrections which were filed on October 24, 2005 and objected to the earlier amendments to the application.

Initially, the specification and claims have been amended to return to the original application of this application in connection with the unit strips and equiangular contact. This is believed to resolve the Examiner's concerns in connection with the language of the specification.

In connection with reference numeral 41, it was originally used to refer to the unit corner strips. These are now referred to in the amended specification as 40", and therefore reference numeral 41 is superfluous. The Examiner states that reference numeral 41 remains in Figure 7B, but it does not, it has been removed from the application and drawings. The exact same illustration of the corner unit strips is present and has been present since the filing of the application. If the Examiner has a concern with the reproducibility of the drawings, while it is submitted that the drawings are certainly acceptable for examination purposes, formal drawings can be obtained and submitted to resolve any issue of darkness of the figure. Note also in connection with this objection from the Examiner that the specification has been amended to go back to the original language referring to intermediate and corner strips. The drawing corrections in question are entirely proper and should be entered.

Finally, in connection with the Examiner's further assertions with respect to reference numeral 41, as pointed out above, reference numeral 41 has been deleted from the application in favor of reference number 40". The exact same

structure originally indicated by reference numeral 41 is now referred to as 40". If the Examiner remains of the opinion that the replacement sheets of drawings introduce new matter to the application, the Examiner is earnestly and respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned to discuss same. Emphatically, the replacement sheets do not at all enter new matter to the specification.

An earnest and thorough attempt has been made by the undersigned to resolve the outstanding issues in this case and place same in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or feels that a telephone or personal interview would be helpful in resolving any outstanding issues which remain in this application after consideration of this amendment, the Examiner is courteously invited to telephone the undersigned and the same would be gratefully appreciated.

It is submitted that the claims as pending herein patentably define over the art relied on by the Examiner and early allowance of same is courteously solicited.

If any fees are required in connection with this case, it is respectfully requested that they be charged to Deposit Account No. 02-0184.

Respectfully submitted,

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